

impunity. The inequality of status enshrined in the line on one side of the frontier and the unwallled territory on the other naturally wounded German pride;" but there was much more in Hitler's *coup* than the removal of a humiliating disability. It was the turning point in post-war history, since a stout wall in the west would enable him to pursue the forward policy in central and eastern Europe on which he had set his heart*

The French Cabinet, like the French people, was divided on the question whether this glaring breach of treaty obligations should be resisted by force. Clemenceau or Poincaré would doubtless have reacted as Hitler's military and civil advisers anticipated, though not the Dictator himself; but no action was taken. Encouragement from London might have tipped the scale, but England, official and unofficial, was disinclined to move. With our usual sense of fair play we felt instinctively that such an unequal arrangement as the demilitarized Rhineland was bound to collapse directly Germany recovered her strength, but the deeper implications of the event were hidden from our unsuspecting eyes. Warnings had come from our Ambassadors at Berlin directly Hitler had gained control, but they were unheeded. "The spirit of the moment," reported Sir Horace Rumbold in his despatch on April 26, 1933, "and the Government of this country, for the first time since the war, are giving State sanction and encouragement to an attitude of mind, as well as to various forms of military training, which can only end in one way. I therefore feel that Germany's neighbours have reason to be vigilant." His successor, Sir Eric Phipps, was even more critical. "The conditions here," he wrote in November 1933, "are not those of a normal civilized country, and

the German Government is not a normal civilized Government and cannot be dealt with as if it were." What superficial observers took to be a movement of national revival was in reality an armed doctrine, as Burke said of Jacobinism, a revolution which threatened not only peace but the whole stately edifice of western civilization.

The German Memorandum presented on March 7 contended that the Franco-Soviet agreement was incompatible with the Locarno pact, which Germany therefore regarded as annulled. "In accordance with the fundamental right of a nation to secure its frontiers and ensure *its* possibilities of defence, the German Government have to-day restored the full and un-